

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 SAJ-01

SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01 /167 W
----- 014702

R 181505Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8650

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PO

SUBJ: PORTUGAL'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN PASSES HALFWAY POINT

SUMMARY: LEFT-WING OPPOSITIONIST ELECTORAL GROUPING AND GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL MOVEMENT CONTINUE TO TRADE FUSILLADES OVER HEADS OF LARGELY INDIFFERENT POPULACE AT MIDWAY IN CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE BLASTED OPPOSITION FOR USING CAMPAIGN PERIOD FOR OWN PROPAGANDA PURPOSES AND FOR REFUSING TO ENGAGE IN SERIOUSNCO TEST FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS. RHETORIC ON BOTH SIDES HAS STRESSED FAMILIAR THEMES; SOME VIOLENCE HAS SPUTTERED ON FRINGES OF CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY

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1. OPPOSITIONIST CDE HAS USED OPENINGS PROVIDED BY

ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO MAKE POLITICAL PROPAGANDA OF PREDICTABLE SORT. CDE CANDIDATES ARE CALLING FOR AN END TO REPRESSION, CENSORSHIP, COLONIAL WARS, MONOPOLISTIC FOREIGN DOMINATION (IN ONE DISTRICT, TWO US-BASED MULTI-NATIONALS, ITT AND GENERAL INSTRUMENTS, WERE SINGLED OUT AS TARGETS). SEEKING AN END TO "SUBMISSION TO IMPERIALISM," CDE CALLS FOR PORTUGAL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO AND RENUNCIATION OF TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP WITH SPAIN. OTHER CDE THEMES ARE LAND REFORM, GENERAL AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS, HIGHER WAGES FOR WORKERS WITHOUT INCREASED PRICES, AND FREE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. CDE HAS CRITICIZED GOP FOR FAILURE TO CONDUCT "SERIOUS" VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN (FOR BACKGROUND SEE LISBON A-68 OF 4/20/73). CDE HAS NOT ASKED FOR VOTES, TO GREAT DISMAY OF GOP; CDE IS INSTEAD HINTING BROADLY THAT IT MAY WITHDRAW ITS CANDIDATES AND CALL FOR ABSTENTION, EVEN THOUGH THIS WILL RESULT IN 5-YEAR SUSPENSION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR PERSONS INVOLVED.

2. ANP CANDIDATES, WITHOUT SHOWING OR CREATING NOTICEABLE ENTHUSIASM, ARE GOING THROUGH MOTIONS OF DEFENDING GOP POLICIES OVER LAST FOUR YEARS, WHILE ATTACKING CDE FOR ITS DOMINATION BY COMMUNISTS, EXTREME DEMANDS, AND FAILURE TO SEEK TO ELECT OWN CANDIDATES. LIKE CDE, ANP RHETORIC IS LARGELY IDEOLOGICAL AND GENERALIZED; VERY FEW SPECIFIC ISSUES HAVE BEEN DEBATED. GOP HAS DEFENDED VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE BY POINTING TO INCREASE IN NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS SINCE 1969 BY 272,000, TO TOTAL OF ALMOST 2,100,000 IN METROPOLE, WITH TRIPLING OF OVERSEAS ELECTORATES. (GOP FIGURES SHOW VOTER REGISTRATION IN PORTUGUESE GUINEA HAS INCREASED FROM 4,122 IN 1969 TO 112,869. THIS SUGGESTS LITERACY REQUIREMENT HAS GONE BY THE BOARDS IN THAT PROVINCE.) MINISTER OF INTERIOR RAPAZOTE, AN ANP CANDIDATE, HAS CALLED CDE CANDIDATES "EMISSARIES OF TERRORISM," HINTING THAT IN FUTURE DIRECT ELECTION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES MIGHT BE ABANDONED. (THIS HAS DRAWN FIRE EVEN IN SOME PRO-GOVERNMENT CIRCLES: NORMALLY PLACID LISBON DAILY SECULO, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS TERMED IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"UNACCEPTABLE.")

3. PORTUGUESE PUBLIC APPEARS INTRIGUED BY RARITY OF POLITICAL DEBATE OF ANY KIND, BUT HAS SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN ITSELF. SALES OF NEWS-PAPERS, PARTICULARLY MORE POLEMIC ONES, HAVE SKYROCKETED; OPPOSITIONIST REPUBLICA, USUALLY OUTSOLD FOUR TO ONE BY LEADING AFTERNOON DAILY, HAS REPORTEDLY TAKEN NUMBER

ONE SPOT SEVERAL TIMES. IN LISBON AREA OPPOSITIONIST MEETINGS GENERALLY DRAW OVERFLOW CROWDS, BUT OUR IMPRESSION IS MANY OF THE SAME PEOPLE ATTEND EACH TIME (VAST MAJORITY ARE STUDENTS). AMCONSUL OPORTO REPORTS CDE MEETINGS VERY SPARSELY ATTENDED IN NORTHERN DISTRICTS, HOWEVER, ANP SHOWS PLAY TO FULL HOUSES, BUT ONLY BECAUSE RURAL WORKERS ARE TRANSPORTED FOR THE PURPOSE. RECENT ANP MEETING IN LARGE THEATRE IN SINTRA ATTENDED BY OVERFLOW CROWD OF WHOM VAST MAJORITY WERE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS BUSSED IN.

4. APPLICATION OF CAMPAIGN RULES (LISBON 3630) HAS BEEN UNEVEN. IN SOME DISTRICTS GOVERNORS HAVE RULED THAT PERSONS UNDER 21 MAY NOT ATTEND POLITICAL MEETINGS, BUT THIS TOO HAS BEEN ENFORCED ONLY SPORADICALLY. AMCONSUL OPORTO REPORTS PERHAPS HALF OF CDE MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR NORTHERN PORTUGAL HAVE BEEN POSTPONED, CANCELLED OR ENDED PREMATURELY FOR VIOLATIONS, SOMETIMES TECHNICAL, OR RULES; FIGURE SOMEWHAT LOWER AROUND LISBON. IN LAST SEVERAL DAYS OPPOSITION HAS SUCCEEDED IN GAINING ACCESS TO LARGE HALLS AND THEATERS FOR THEIR MEETINGS, PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF PROTESTS OVER EARLIER DIFFICULTIES.

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5. PUBLIC DISINTEREST IN ELECTION STEMS FROM CERTAINTY OF OVERWHELMING ANP VICTORY. ALSO, PUBLIC IS AWARE THAT ANP CANDIDATES REPRESENT NOTHING NEW AND THAT OPPOSITIONISTS ARE GENERALLY MARXISTS DOMINATED BY PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY. ALTHOUGH GOP'S TRADITIONAL WILLINGNESS TO CALL ITS CRITICS COMMUNISTS MAY HAVE NUMBED ELECTORATE SOMEWHAT, PUBLICATION IN EXPRESSO OF RECENT PCP DOCUMENT TYING PARTY TO CDE, COMBINED WITH PCP'S CLANDESTINE BROADCASTS AND TRACTS ON ELECTION HAVE RESULTED IN GENERAL CONCLUSION THAT THIS TIME COMMUNISTS ARE INDEED IN THE CDE SADDLE.

6. SOME VIOLENCE HAS OCCURRED ON FRINGE OF CAMPAIGN -- AN OPPOSITIONIST STUDENT HAS BEEN WOUNDED BY A POLICEMAN (LISBON 2823) AND MAOISTS DENOUNCING ELECTORAL COMPLICITY
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OF PCP 'SOCIAL CHAUVINISTS' HAVE STAGED DEMONSTRATION IN DOWNTOWN LISBON (LISBON 3774) AND HAVE PROVOKED SMALL ISOLATED DISTURBANCES ELSEWHERE. IN ONE INCIDENT BANK WINDOWS WERE BROKEN. CONSUL AND ADMIN/CONSULAR OFFICER AT AMCONSUL OPORTO RECEIVED ANONYMOUS THREATENING PHONE CALLS ONE NIGHT LAST WEEK. RUMOR MILL IN LISBON SAYS MAOISTS AND/OR NATIONAL PATRIOTIC LIBERATION FRONT HAVE PLANNED BOMBINGS FOR ELECTION CAMPAIGN, BUT THUS FAR ONLY INCIDENT HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE RAILROAD BRIDGE (LISBON 3670), WHICH HAS NOT BEEN CLAIMED BY ANY GROUP TO OUR KNOWLEDGE.

7. COMMENT: ONLY QUESTION IN DOUBT IS WHETHER OR NOT CDE WILL PULL OUT OF CAMPAIGN ON ELECTION EVE. PRESENT INDICATORS ARE THAT IT WILL.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Authority: thigpegh
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